

Chapter One: Introduction

Grand Canyon National Park – Round House Productions- <http://www.rhpmedia.com/>

GC Ranger, Pam Cox:

"Hello, We hope the information in this video will answer some of the questions you may have about running the Colorado river through the Grand Canyon. As users of this river corridor, we all have a vested interest in preserving it for future Generations. On behalf of the Park Service I'd like to thank you for watching this video."

"If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water."

-Loren Eiseley

Narration:

Ever since humans took their first peek over the edge of the Grand Canyon, it has influenced a tangible respect from anyone who's seen it. No matter what their background or motivation, none could discount the power of its sheer scale or the extremes in temperature, geology, and beauty that make up its personality. To this day, people come from all over the world just to see it first hand.

There's a certain group of visitors that seek a more intense journey into the core of the Canyon; to be part of the dance of water on the Colorado River as it drops almost 2000 feet on its way to Lake Mead. It's what the Hualapai tribe calls the Ha'yitad, or the "backbone" and running its length through Grand Canyon National Park is surely one of the prime outdoor experiences available anywhere in the world.

Many of those who run the river have little in common except their passion for these giant waves and the nomadic experience of floating down these corridors of time. Most people on private trips who venture down Grand Canyon are already accomplished whitewater boaters, even so, the challenges and adventures of the next days will prove to be at times both awe inspiring and challenging.

This section of the Colorado River is one of the top ten of the world's whitewater runs. It also provides for the rare experience of drifting through one of the 7 natural wonders of the world.

No doubt you've committed time and resources to support your intention to go on this trip. Now that your opportunity has arrived, we hope that the river users who have gone before you have traveled lightly, so that your experience can be as enjoyable as theirs was.

Not only is it your turn to run the canyon, but it's your turn to be a steward in a continuous team approach to protecting the cultural and natural resources of the canyon ecosystem.

The Grand Canyon is a world of extremes and contradictions. It's tough to truly understand the contrast between its geologic power and the fragile resources that exist here.

While this stretch of the Colorado River was known to indigenous tribes for more than 10,000 years, the two hundred and seventy seven mile section through what is now the Grand Canyon National Park hadn't been navigated until John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition set out to document the run. Powell and his team wrote about their first-person accounts of the journey and helped focus national attention on the area.

What his group experienced was a wild river with no dams controlling its flow and no other river runners to compete with for camp spots.

Today's reality is a bit different. The river is dam controlled and the run has become so popular that today roughly 29,000 boaters float the Colorado River each year. Modern boaters face some of the same challenges that Powell's team did, but with the advantage of modern equipment and detailed maps. The **new** challenge is to minimize our collective impact.

While the Colorado River and Grand Canyon may affect you physically and mentally, **you** will affect the canyon just by your presence there.

And since there are so many of us now, we've learned a few tips over the years to both protect the resources and help make your trip successful. It's a delicate balancing act for the park service, and one that we continually improve upon.

Lees Ferry, located some 15 miles below Glen Canyon dam, marks the starting point for all trips through Grand Canyon. Before you arrive at Lees Ferry, be sure to check all your equipment, especially the required equipment as listed in your permit packet. The Lee's Ferry ranger will be checking your equipment before you start your trip, so make sure it's accessible. Remember, there are no river equipment suppliers or repair facilities near Lee's Ferry, so be sure your equipment is in working order before you leave home.

With the launching of some 150 to 200 people a day the launch ramp becomes a very busy and potentially dangerous place. Due to constantly arriving and departing vehicles, mountains of baggage, ropes, and equipment, extra caution needs to be exercised to make sure your trip doesn't end before it starts. We recommend that private trips arrive a day before their launch to rig and camp at the private river camp to get an early start on launch day.

Look for check-in instructions on the bulletin board on the downstream side of the ramp. From the mouth of the Paria River you will enter Grand Canyon National Park and the start of your journey.